

AFFIDAVIT

I, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Special Agent (SA) Clark S. Powers (your affiant), being first duly sworn, hereby depose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Your affiant has been employed by HSI since December 2016, having initially been assigned to our Sells, Arizona (AZ) office. During that time, your affiant was assigned to the Sells Border Enforcement and Security Task Force (BEST), which focused on human, narcotics, bulk cash, and weapon smuggling occurring between Ports of Entry (POE) and the Phoenix, AZ metropolitan area. Beginning in October 2020, your affiant was assigned to the HSI Columbus, Ohio office, as a participating member of the Central Ohio High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) multi-agency task force. Your affiant gained experience through a Bachelor of the Arts Degree in Criminal Justice in 2007, completion of the Criminal Investigator Training Program (CITP) and completion of the HSI Special Agent Training Academy in 2017. During CITP and HSI Academy training, your affiant was instructed in all phases of criminal investigation such as: Criminal Law, Search and Seizure, Field Enforcement Techniques, Firearms Proficiency, and Interviewing and Evidence. Prior to becoming a Special Agent, your affiant served as a United States Border Patrol Agent in Ajo, AZ from September 2008 to December 2016. Your affiant is responsible for enforcing federal criminal statutes including, but not limited to, controlled substance violations, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §§ 841 and 846.

2. While employed as a Special Agent, your affiant has conducted and participated in numerous investigations of criminal activity, including bulk cash smuggling, human smuggling, firearms and bulk ammunition smuggling, law enforcement officer assault

investigations, and controlled substance investigations. These investigations have included interviewing defendants and witnesses, conducting surveillance, controlling informants, preparing, and serving search warrants, as well as executing arrest warrants, and seizing evidence associated with criminal activity. Your affiant is familiar with narcotics traffickers' methods of operation including the importation, storage, distribution, and transportation of illegal drugs, the collection of money, and the laundering of illicit proceeds derived from criminal activity.

3. The information set forth in this affidavit is based upon my knowledge, training, experience, and participation in investigations involving the smuggling, possession, distribution, and storage of narcotics and illicit proceeds derived from the sale of narcotics. This information is also based on the knowledge, training, experience, and investigations conducted by fellow law enforcement officers, who have reported to me either directly or indirectly. Your affiant believes this information to be true and reliable. I know it is a violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846 for any person to knowingly possess and/or conspire to possess with the intent to distribute a controlled substance.

4. The information set forth in this affidavit is based upon my personal participation in this investigation, as well as information obtained from other HSI Special Agents, and sheriff's deputies assisting in this investigation.

5. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing a criminal complaint and arrest warrant, your affiant has not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. Your affiant has set forth only the facts that he believes are necessary to establish probable cause to believe that Antony Albert HERNANDEZ violated 21 U.S.C. § 846.

FACTS ESTABLISHING PROBABLE CAUSE

6. The United States, including HSI and the Franklin County Sheriff's Office (FCSO), are conducting a criminal investigation of Antony Albert HERNANDEZ (hereafter referred to as HERNANDEZ), Lance Tacory MAYFIELD, Estevan ESQUIBEL Lara, and Richard ELIZONDO Jr., who are suspected of conspiring to possess with intent to distribute more than 5 kilograms of methamphetamine, in violation of 21 U.S.C. § 846.

7. To date, this investigation has shown that ELIZONDO, ESQUIBEL, and MAYFIELD are based out of California and Texas, and have coordinated the transportation and delivery of narcotics and money from California to Ohio via commercial aircraft.

8. On December 22, 2022, HSI Task Force Officer (TFO) Ryan Gibbons was contacted by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in reference to an undeclared Glock 9mm pistol that was located during TSA bag screening. The bag containing the firearm was checked-in with American Airlines flight AA3894, from Cleveland, OH (CLE) to O'Hare International, Chicago, IL (ORD), by ESQUIBEL, under the name Estevan Ladislado Lara-ESQUIBEL, DOB XX/XX/1992. ORD was ESQUIBEL's connecting flight to his final destination of Los Angeles, CA (LAX), via flight AA1502.

9. After TSA located the undeclared firearm, they escorted the bag back to the American Airlines ticket counter and requested that American Airlines have ESQUIBEL return to the ticket counter. ESQUIBEL had already boarded the flight to ORD. The boarding process for AA3894 concluded and the door to the jet bridge was closed. An American Airlines gate agent removed ESQUIBEL from flight AA3894 and asked him to return to the American Airlines ticket counter. ESQUIBEL did not return to the ticket counter and abandoned the bag by leaving the airport. It was later discovered, via a review of Cleveland Hopkins security camera

footage, that ESQUIBEL exited Cleveland Hopkins Airport and was picked up by an unknown person near the now-closed Sheraton hotel.

10. TSA's administrative search of ESQUIBEL's dark green roller bag revealed a Glock 45 9mm pistol, 457 rounds of Winchester 9mm ammunition, and two Glock magazines in vacuum sealed plastic.

11. It was discovered that ESQUIBEL had a second checked bag, a "black Lucas roller bag," that was not removed from the plane prior to its departure. That second bag was returned to CLE due to ESQUIBEL not being aboard the flight. TFO Cline took custody of the black Lucas roller bag, belonging to ESQUIBEL, from the American Airlines baggage office at approximately 5:00 pm on December 22, 2022.

12. A canine sniff was conducted on the black Lucas roller bag by Cleveland Police Officer Andrejcak and his canine partner Finnegan, who has been a narcotics detection canine since 2017. Finnegan is trained and certified by the Ohio Peace Officer's Training Commission (OPOTA) to alert to heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana. Officer Andrejcak advised TFO Cline that Finnegan alerted to the presence of an illegal narcotic odor on the black Lucas roller bag.

13. A search warrant for ESQUIBEL's black Lucas roller bag was sought and received in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court. Cuyahoga County Judge Nancy Russo signed the search warrant. The search warrant for ESQUIBEL's black Lucas roller bag was executed by TFO Cline and TFO Gibbons on December 27, 2022.

14. A warrant search of ESQUIBEL's black Lucas roller bag revealed 136 grams (bag weight) of Fentanyl in vacuum sealed plastic, a Colt 1911 38 Super pistol vacuum sealed in plastic, one Colt 38 Super magazine, and 247 rounds of Winchester 38 Super ammunition.

15. Further investigation showed that ESQUIBEL was travelling with "ELIZONDO", DOB XX/XX/2004. Additional review of Cleveland Hopkins security camera footage revealed ESQUIBEL and ELIZONDO arrived at the airport together. Upon entering the airport, they walked to the American Airlines ticket counter, but spoke to separate agents. The camera footage showed that ELIZONDO checked a nearly identical bag to ESQUIBEL's black Lucas roller bag and also transported a medium sized roller bag through the north TSA checkpoint. ESQUIBEL appeared to have paid for ELIZONDO's checked bag.

16. Research conducted on ELIZONDO by investigators revealed that on September 19, 2022, HSI Minneapolis, MN seized \$45,000.00, which was believed to be proceeds from drug trafficking, from ELIZONDO at the Minneapolis Airport.

17. Investigators further learned, on October 27, 2022, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Dallas, TX seized \$12,000.00, which was believed to be proceeds from drug trafficking, from ESQUIBEL.

18. On January 14, 2023, ELIZONDO arrived in Columbus, OH (CMH) from LAX with a checked bag. On January 16, 2023, HSI Cleveland interdicted ELIZONDO as he was about to depart. He was carrying approximately \$10,000 cash and only transporting a backpack. To avoid alerting ELIZONDO of any on-going investigation, he was allowed to board his flight to LAX with the claimed cash.

19. On December 27, 2022, investigators subpoenaed toll records for telephone number 626-510-0241, which was the telephone number that ESQUIBEL provided to American Airlines for his December 22, 2022, flight. A review of the toll records from around the date of the Fentanyl seizure on December 22, 2022, provided investigators with multiple numbers of interest. Two of the numbers of interest were 614-475-4450 (Tri Link Storage Facility in Columbus, OH) and 682-559-1686.

20. On January 6, 2023, investigators subpoenaed AT&T regarding 682-559-1686. The subscriber information listed for 682-559-1686 was listed as Lance MAYFIELD of 729 Rawlins Dr., Apt 309, Lancaster, TX. It stated MAYFIELD had been a customer since 08/19/2021. There was an email address (Newnewlove@rocketmail.com) linked to the account for MAYFIELD. The account was still showing as active and current.

21. On January 17, 2023, HSI SA Curtis Brabender, assigned to the Columbus, OH field office, served a subpoena on TriLink Storage located at 2470 Sunbury Rd. Columbus, OH. This subpoena requested all information regarding rental units tied to ESQUIBEL and/or ELIZONDO.

22. On February 8, 2023, HSI SA Brabender met with the manager of TriLink Storage located at 2470 Sunbury Rd., Columbus, OH to retrieve all files related to the previously submitted subpoena. TriLink provided all files they had related to Unit #244 located at their Sunbury Rd. location. According to the records provided by TriLink Storage, Unit #244 was rented by Estevan ESQUIBEL with listed mailing address of 4848 Walnut Rd., Phillan, CA 92371. ESQUIBEL provided phone number 626-510-0241 and an email address of estevan.esquibel@icloud.com. ESQUIBEL had rented a 5x5x8 unit for \$80.63 per month. The agreement was signed on 11/22/2022. The gate access code assigned for this unit is 5623924.

23. The identification document provided was a photograph taken of a California Identification Card: E1106849. This ID card is for our subject, Estevan Ladislado ESQUIBEL Lara, with a date of birth: XX/XX/1992. The address listed on the ID is 25590 Prospect Ave., 24C, Loma Linda, CA 92354. This address is different than that which was listed on the rental agreement for Unit #244. This ID was issued on 09/03/2021.

24. TriLink provided a list of access dates and times for their storage facility. Every unit has a unique access code, so the list provided only showed the access granted for gate code 5623924, which matched the number listed on the above-mentioned contract. The following is a breakdown of dates the code was used to access the storage facility secure area:

Date	Number of Times Used to Access Facility
November 22, 2022	3
November 23, 2022	2
November 28, 2022	3
November 30, 2022	2
December 1, 2022	2
December 2, 2022	4
December 3, 2022	1
December 4, 2022	5
December 5, 2022	1
December 6, 2022	2
December 7, 2022	3
December 8, 2022	3
December 9, 2022	3
December 10, 2022	1
December 15, 2022	1
December 16, 2022	1
December 21, 2022	1
December 22, 2022	3
December 29, 2022	2
December 30, 2022	2
January 1, 2023	2
January 10, 2023	1
February 2, 2023	3
February 3, 2023	1

26. SA Brabender was able to review surveillance camera footage from the February 2nd and 3rd dates, which depicted the security camera viewshed fixed upon the facility's secured entry gate, where the access keypad is also located. The same four door silver Chevrolet Malibu sedan bearing Ohio registration: JID2649 was observed at the TriLink Storage entry gate each of the four times the code was entered to gain access. This vehicle is registered to PV Holding Corp with a listed address of 3801 International GTWY Columbus, OH. This is one of the rental car facilities located at the Columbus International Airport. SA Brabender was able to observe what appeared to be a black male driver, wearing a black coat, enter the code into the gate.

27. On February 8, 2023, investigators subpoenaed Avis Budget Group regarding rental information pertaining to the Chevy Malibu bearing Ohio registration JID2649.

28. On February 9, 2023, HSI TFO Gibbons received information from a subpoena that showed Lance MAYFIELD (DOB: XX/XX/1995) with a listed address of 729 Rawlins Dr., Lancaster, TX 75146 as the customer who rented the Chevy from February 1, 2023, through February 3, 2023. The listed phone number on the reservation was 682-559-1686. The driver's license number listed on the reservation was 47803568, which matches MAYFIELD's TX driver's license.

29. On February 9, 2023, SA Brabender met with the on-site manager of AVIS rental cars located at 4106 International Gateway, Columbus, OH 43219. This is the rental car facility located at the Columbus International Airport. The manager was able to pull up surveillance video tied to the February 1, 2023, renting of the Chevy Malibu, JID2649. A black male, wearing a black winter coat, backpack, and carrying a Nike shoe box can be seen approaching the counter. The individual appears to be the same build as MAYFIELD's driver's license describes him. Additionally, the coat he is wearing at the rental car facility appears to match the coat worn

by the driver of the Malibu when accessing the storage facility on February 2nd and 3rd. SA Brabender believes, given the registration for the vehicle was listed under MAYFIELD's name, it is likely indeed MAYFIELD who rented the vehicle. No other persons are observed walking in or out of the rental terminal with MAYFIELD.

30. On March 14, 2023, at approximately 1:58 pm, Officer Troy Gibson with the Delaware County Sheriff's Office utilized his narcotics detection canine to conduct an open-air sniff of Unit #244 at the TriLink Storage facility, located at 2470 Sunbury Rd., Columbus, OH. Officer Gibson's canine alerted to the presence of a narcotics odor he is trained to detect emanating from inside unit #244.

31. On March 14, 2023, at approximately 4:15 pm, investigators learned that MAYFIELD and another individual identified as Antony HERNANDEZ were arriving at John Glenn International Airport via Spirit Airlines flight NK888 from Los Angeles. HSI Cleveland served controlled substance enforcement subpoena HSI-CL-2023-067085 upon Spirit Airlines for historical and future flight information up to June 1, 2023. Information provided to investigators indicated that MAYFIELD would be on board Spirit Airlines Flight NK888 from LAX to Columbus, OH on March 14, 2023. A person, who on prior occasions has provided reliable information on potential suspects to HSI Cleveland, provided TFO Gibbons with a flight manifest for NK888. HERNANDEZ was listed as a passenger on the manifest and utilized phone number 520-600-9357 when purchasing a ticket for the flight. Phone toll analysis conducted by HSI Cleveland Criminal Analysts indicated that 520-600-9357 contacted MAYFIELD 14 times since February 2, 2023.

32. On March 14, 2023, at approximately 5:20 pm, investigators conducted surveillance as HERNANDEZ and MAYFIELD exited the aircraft and proceeded to the baggage

claim area of the airport. MAYFIELD immediately departed the airport, taking an airport shuttle to the rental car parking deck, located just under one mile from the main airport terminal.

HERNANDEZ remained in the airport until he could retrieve a checked-in bag from baggage claim. HERNANDEZ was observed to be talking on his cellular phone as he retrieved a dark gray, hard shell, roller suitcase. As HERNANDEZ departed the airport, he was approached by investigators. HERNANDEZ gave consent for investigators to search his checked-in bag.

Investigators observed that the zipper for the roller bag's main compartment was super glued shut. Concealed within the lining of HERNANDEZ's bag was approximately 15 pounds of a crystal substance which tested presumptive positive for methamphetamines.

33. In a post Miranda interview, HERNANDEZ admitted to transporting a suitcase, which he initially stated he believed to contain marijuana, from Los Angeles, CA to Columbus, OH. HERNANDEZ identified his facilitator for the smuggling attempt as a skinny, African-American male, known to HERNANDEZ as "Trapo". HERNANDEZ provided consent to search the iPhone 5 found on his person, and identified a contact saved as "OH" with listed phone number 682-559-1686. Investigators previously determined that this phone number is subscribed to by MAYFIELD.

34. HERNANDEZ stated that MAYFIELD was utilizing a storage unit in Columbus, Ohio to store narcotics. HERNANDEZ explained that he was last in Ohio with MAYFIELD approximately one month prior to his March 14, 2023 encounter with investigators, in order to transport a similar amount of methamphetamine. HERNANDEZ indicated that MAYFIELD eventually showed HERNANDEZ the storage unit used to store narcotics. HERNANDEZ described the storage unit as being located next to a school and near a large green field. The TriLink Storage location, where Unit #244 is located, is bordered on the north by Mifflin Middle

School and bordered on the east by North East Park, which matches the description provided by HERNANDEZ. Investigators showed an ariel photograph of TriLink Storage, located at 2470 Sunbury Rd. Columbus, OH, to HERNANDEZ. HERNANDEZ positively identified the exact area of unit #244 as being the storage locker that MAYFIELD was using to store narcotics.

35. HERNANDEZ stated he had transported marijuana previously via commercial flights approximately 15 times. Once he was introduced to Trapo, aka MAYFIELD, HERNANDEZ agreed to transport methamphetamine, telling MAYFIELD "If it pays better, I'm down". HERNANDEZ stated he was to be paid approximately \$7,000 upon successful completion of the transportation attempt.

36. As a result of the positive K-9 alert on TriLink Storage Unit #244 on March 14, 2023, and the information obtained from the custodial interview of HERNANDEZ, investigators applied for, and were granted a Franklin County Municipal Court Search Warrant for TriLink Self Storage Unit #244, located at 2470 Sunbury Rd., Columbus, OH 43219. Franklin County Municipal Court Judge Jarrod B. Skinner issued the search warrant at approximately 8:50 pm. At approximately 9:50 pm, investigators entered Unit #244. Inside Unit #244, investigators located a vacuum sealer, wrapping and packaging materials similar to those found in HERNANDEZ's roller bag, 3 digital scales, several hard-shell roller bags which had been cut open, a United States Parcel Service parcel return service receipt addressed to Lance MAYFIELD at 729 Rawlins Dr., Lancaster, TX, and an AT&T packing slip addressed to Lance MAYFIELD at 729 Rawlins Dr., Lancaster, TX. The AT&T packing slip listed mobile phone number 682-559-1686.

CONCLUSION

37. Based on the foregoing facts, your affiant believes that there is probable cause to believe that Antony Albert HERNANDEZ violated 21 U.S.C. § 846, conspiracy to possess with

intent to distribute more than 5 kilograms of methamphetamine. Accordingly, your affiant requests the issuance of a criminal complaint and arrest warrant for Antony Albert HERNANDEZ.



Special Agent Clark Powers
Homeland Security Investigations

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of March, 2023.



Elizabeth A. Preston Deavers
United States Magistrate Judge

